

# NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF U.S. NAVY AND MARINE CORPS HEALTH CARE • 2011 & 2012 WINNER OF BEST NAVY BLOG

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Navy Medicine News](#) | [Navy Medicine WebSite](#) | [I AM Navy Medicine](#)

Written on DECEMBER 7, 2012 AT 11:03 AM by [VKREMER](#)

## “A Date Which Will Live in Infamy”

Filed under [CORPSMAN](#), [HEATH](#), [NAVY HISTORY](#)

[NO COMMENTS]

By Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW) Robert Coddington, Navy Medicine Operational Training Center Command Master Chief



SAN DIEGO (Oct. 30, 2012) Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Nakeisha Gibson, a student in the advanced dental assistant program, talks with Command Master Chief Joe Coddington, from the Navy Medicine Operational Training Center. (U.S. Navy Photo by Bruce Cummins/Released)

Those words, spoken the day after an attack on American soil 71 years ago, which claimed the lives of more than 2,400 Americans and wounded 1,100 more, sank four U.S. Navy battleships and damaged four more, sank three cruisers, three destroyers, one minelayer and damaged 188 aircraft, truly do register as a date that will stand the test of time.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in the early morning hours of Dec. 7, 1941, forever changed the

face of the U.S. Military, propelled our great nation into a global conflict that redefined the manner in which Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines engage in armed conflict over the course of several generations.

As a Hospital Corpsman, I reflect on that day and think to those wearing the caduceus while serving aboard ships. Those serving in hospitals that rapidly filled to capacity. Those working in makeshift triage areas hastily erected by those left standing after the surprise attack. I know those corpsmen reacted in the manner our corpsmen do today – with an energy and willingness to put others’ lives ahead of their own in defense of the country whose ideals they have sworn to uphold.

Those corpsmen faced a daunting task as explosions rocked their vessels. They struggled to keep the ship afloat and provided lifesaving care for patients, some of whom were gravely wounded. These corpsmen were overwhelmed, but I also don’t doubt they continued to do the job for which they had been trained – save the lives of their shipmates.

Today, 71 years later, the role of the corpsman has continued to evolve, as our shipmates are actively engaged in combat operations in countries far from home, working alongside Army and Air Force counterparts in an environment markedly different yet surprisingly similar to

### Navy Medicine Video

Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

### Navy Medicine Social Media

 Follow us on Twitter

 Join us on Facebook

 Read our publications

 View our photo stream

 Watch our videos

### Navy Medicine Live Archives

[February 2015 \(15\)](#)

[January 2015 \(12\)](#)

[December 2014 \(17\)](#)

[November 2014 \(11\)](#)

what the frontrunners of the most decorated Corps in the U.S. Navy faced generations ago.



They are fighting a war in which surprise attacks abound; they are fighting against an enemy who willingly die to accomplish their mission; and yet they continue the proud tradition the Hospital Corpsman forged over many years of conflict and peace – serving their fellow warriors and shipmates joined in service to their country.

I reflect on what these individuals must have been like these 71 years ago – I doubt they were different from you or me. They were from all parts of the United

States – farms in Iowa, mines in West Virginia, apartments in New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. They probably followed some of the same baseball and football teams we still watch today, joked and poked fun at each other during evening chow on mess decks that looked strikingly similar to those we still eat on today.

And like the Sailors I know today, they would do their jobs so their shipmates could continue to do theirs.

Think of these Sailors Dec. 7. Remember their sacrifice, their honor, courage, and commitment.

And then look at the shipmates by your side. They are the same young men and women who proudly wear the uniform of the U.S. Navy and the caduceus of the Hospital Corps today and carry on the greatest of our traditions from generations past.

*(Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW) Robert Coddington is a nearly 25-year Corpsman currently working as the Navy Medicine Operational Training Center Command Master Chief).*

[← Next post](#)[Previous post →](#)

vkremer tagged this post with: [battleships](#), [corpsmen](#), [Navy](#), [Navy history](#), [Navy Medicine](#), [Navy Medicine Operational Training Center](#), [Navy Pearl Harbor](#), [vessels](#)

Read 221 articles by [vkremer](#)

<a href="#">October 2014 (15)</a>
<a href="#">September 2014 (20)</a>
<a href="#">August 2014 (14)</a>
<a href="#">July 2014 (13)</a>
<a href="#">June 2014 (8)</a>
<a href="#">May 2014 (11)</a>
<a href="#">April 2014 (9)</a>
<a href="#">March 2014 (14)</a>
<a href="#">February 2014 (7)</a>
<a href="#">January 2014 (7)</a>
<a href="#">December 2013 (7)</a>
<a href="#">November 2013 (12)</a>
<a href="#">October 2013 (7)</a>
<a href="#">September 2013 (14)</a>
<a href="#">August 2013 (13)</a>
<a href="#">July 2013 (11)</a>
<a href="#">June 2013 (22)</a>
<a href="#">May 2013 (15)</a>
<a href="#">April 2013 (14)</a>
<a href="#">March 2013 (14)</a>
<a href="#">February 2013 (14)</a>
<a href="#">January 2013 (12)</a>
<a href="#">December 2012 (11)</a>
<a href="#">November 2012 (11)</a>
<a href="#">October 2012 (7)</a>
<a href="#">September 2012 (9)</a>
<a href="#">August 2012 (12)</a>
<a href="#">July 2012 (13)</a>
<a href="#">June 2012 (17)</a>
<a href="#">May 2012 (22)</a>
<a href="#">April 2012 (14)</a>
<a href="#">March 2012 (13)</a>
<a href="#">February 2012 (14)</a>
<a href="#">January 2012 (13)</a>
<a href="#">December 2011 (13)</a>
<a href="#">November 2011 (20)</a>
<a href="#">October 2011 (22)</a>
<a href="#">September 2011 (12)</a>
<a href="#">August 2011 (16)</a>